

09/597,371

E0889

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating within a network interface apparatus, the method comprising:

creating special internal communication frames in a first part of the apparatus, wherein the special frames each include: including

an identifier that distinguishes the special frames from other frames passing through the apparatus; and

physical layer device control information;

sending the special frames from the first part to a second part of the apparatus through at least a media access controller of the apparatus, wherein the second part includes including a physical layer device;

identifying the special frames from among incoming frames incoming to the second part from the first part, wherein the identifying includes including examining the incoming frames for the presence of the identifier; and

extracting the physical layer device control information from the special frames at the second part.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the creating includes creating the special frames with the identifier in the position of a destination address, and wherein the identifying includes examining destination addresses of the incoming frames.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the Identifier is an otherwise unused IEEE address that is not used by a currently-operating device.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising controlling the physical layer device using the control information.

09/597,371

E0889

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the extracting the control information includes changing the contents of memory registers of the second part.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first part includes an intermediate driver capable of creating the special frames.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the sending the special frames includes passing the special frames through a device driver.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising creating additional special internal communication frames in the second part, the additional special frames including an additional identifier, and passing the additional special frames to the first part.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the identifier and the additional identifier are in the form of destination addresses.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the identifier and the additional identifier are the same.

11. (Currently Amended) A network interface apparatus comprising:
a network medium interface;
a media access controller operatively coupled to the network medium interface;
and
a device driver arrangement operatively coupled to the media access controller,
the device driver arrangement including a device driver operatively configured to

09/597,371

E0889

communicate with the media access controller, and an intermediate driver operatively configured to communicate control information to the network medium interface;

wherein the intermediate driver and the network medium interface are operatively configured to communicate via special internal communication frames.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the network medium interface includes a second media access controller and a physical layer device.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 12, ~~43~~, wherein the special frames are formatted to pass through the second media access controller as if the special frames were data frames.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, ~~43~~, wherein the special frames each include an identifier.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 15,
wherein the identifier is placed in each of the special frames in a position corresponding to a destination address in a data frame; and
wherein the identifier has the same format as the destination address.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 16, ~~47~~, wherein the identifier is an otherwise unused IEEE address that is not used by a currently-operating device.

09/597,371

E0889

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the intermediate driver is operatively between the device driver and the media access controller.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the device driver is operatively between the intermediate driver and the media access controller.

21. (Currently Amended) A network interface apparatus comprising:
a network medium interface which includes a physical layer device;
a media access controller operatively coupled to the network medium interface;
a device driver operatively configured to communicate with the media access controller; and

means for controlling the physical layer device by passing control information through the media access controller,

wherein the means for controlling includes means for creating and sending special internal communication frames which include the control information.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the network medium interface includes a second media access controller operatively coupled to the physical layer device.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the means for creating the special internal communication frames includes means for creating frames that are treated by the media access controller as data frames.

09/597,371

E0889

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the network medium interface includes means for identifying the special frames.

26. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the special internal communication frames are sent only within the network interface apparatus, and are not passed outside the network interface apparatus.

27. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the network medium interface is configured to prevent passing of the special internal communication frames outside of the apparatus.

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the network medium interface is configured to prevent passing of the special internal communication frames outside of the apparatus.